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ABSTRACT

The aims of the report are threefold: (1) to assess the general level of social studies learning of seventh grade students in California public schools; (2) to provide a comparison of the general level of social studies learning to those of other curriculum areas; and (3) to provide a comparison of the relative level of social studies learning by students in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Two different test instruments were administered to a sample of seventh grade students in approximately 65 schools throughout California. The "Sequential Tests of Educational Progress" (STEP), a standardized test, was administered to assess the level of performance of California students in relation to students nationwide. Second, a new test, the "California Social Studies Test" (CSST), was developed to identify particular areas of strength and weakness in the social studies learning of California students. California students performed below the national average on STEP. The CSST revealed areas of strength including knowledge of government, identifying values and value conflicts, making inferences about cultural practices, and acceptance of others. Areas of weakness were knowledge of social science concepts, work-study skills, comprehension of social studies text, and knowledge of rights and responsibilities. Scores for students in suburban communities and medium-size cities were slightly higher than scores for students in urban and rural communities. (MK)

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Assessment of Social Studies Learning of California Seventh Grade Students

A Report to the California Legislature,
as Required by Assembly
Concurrent Resolution No. 139

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
and
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Wilson Riles-Superintendent of Public Instruction
Sacramento, 1976

SØ 010107

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1976

Resolution Requiring This Report

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 207

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 139—Relative to social studies.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 11, 1974]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 139, Berman. Schools: social studies assessment.

Requests the State Board of Education to sample social studies learning at the 7th-grade level in a prescribed manner.

WHEREAS, Concern has been expressed over a serious deterioration in public school students' grasp of social studies concepts and critical thinking skills; and

WHEREAS, At the same time, state-mandated testing programs have emphasized the low reading and mathematics scores, thereby limiting social studies courses in favor of remedial reading and remedial mathematics; and

WHEREAS, It is feared that relatively lower scores would be found in social studies learning if this area were to be measured; and

WHEREAS, Such a serious imbalance in our curriculum does serious harm to citizenship education in California in general, and in particular in minority communities; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 12820) of Division 9 of the Education Code provides that in addition to annual testing in reading and mathematics, other content courses may be assessed as designated by the State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, Section 12831 of the Education Code authorizes the Department of Education to use portions of tests, and to otherwise engage in sampling the level of achievements of pupils in grades 6 and 12; and

WHEREAS, The use of sampling techniques suggests that a variety of instruments might be used without disrupting any single pupil's ongoing educational program; and

WHEREAS, It is suggested that the seventh grade be used as an appropriate level for assessment since most pupils will be in departmentalized social studies classes, and the results may be useful for diagnosis and curriculum decisions in the following two years, and the cumulative effect of the six years of elementary learning will be objectively sampled; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the State Board of Education is requested to sample social studies learning at the seventh grade in a manner which will reveal the general level of social studies learning relative to other areas of the curriculum, and will reveal the relative level of social studies learning of pupils in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and be it further

Resolved, That upon completion of this study a report of the findings of this study be filed with the Chief Clerk of the Assembly and the Secretary of the Senate; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a copy of this resolution to the State Board of Education.

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SUMMARY

Although numerous studies have highlighted recent trends in student achievement in the basic skills, no comparable information is available regarding student achievement in social studies. Little has been known about either the general level of social studies learning or particular areas of strength and weakness in social studies learning among California students.

During the 1975-76 school year 12,656 seventh grade students in 65 schools throughout California were tested to satisfy requirements of Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 139 of 1974. The resolution directed the Department of Education to conduct an assessment of student performance in the area of social studies based upon a sample of seventh grade students in California public schools. The legislation also called for a comparison of the relative level of social studies learning among students in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Overall guidance for the social studies assessment was provided by members of the Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee. Members of the committee were involved in determining areas for assessment within social studies as well as devising a strategy for the assessment. It was determined that the general level of social studies learning could best be assessed by administering two different instruments. First, it was decided that a standardized test should be administered in order to assess the level of performance of California students in relation to students nationwide. The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) (Series II) - Social Studies was the standardized test selected for this portion of the assessment. Second, the committee determined that a new test should be developed especially for this assessment in order to identify particular areas of strength and weakness in the social studies learning of California students. So that the assessment would reflect specific priorities for social studies education in California, the Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools was used as the guide for selection and development of items for the California Social Studies Test (CSST).

Items on the CSST cover a broad range of topics related to the five goals in the framework. Priorities for social studies education described in the framework are interdisciplinary concepts, social sciences skills, diversity, social values, and social participation. Items on the CSST were organized into eleven reporting categories based on logical groupings of items.

The two tests used in the assessment (the CSST and the STEP social studies test) were assigned to students on a classroom basis, with each student taking only one of the two tests. In most classrooms the CSST was the test administered. For purposes of test administration the 208 items on the CSST were distributed over five test forms. Each student completed only one of the five forms.

Consistent with other components of the California Assessment Program, the social studies assessment is directed toward total program review rather than the performance of individual students. However, since only a statewide sample of students was involved in this assessment, no results are available for particular schools or districts.

Since the items of the CSST were selected and developed specifically for the purpose of this assessment, it was necessary to rely on the judgments of subject area experts in determining whether the level of performance of California students was adequate or in need of improvement. Student performance was reviewed by the social studies committee mostly on an item-by-item basis. Reporting categories in which performance was judged adequate for most items were designated as areas of strength. Reporting categories in which performance was rated in need of improvement for most items were classified as areas of weakness.

The findings of the social studies assessment are as follows:

1. Of the eleven reporting categories which comprise the CSST, five were identified as areas of strength, and four were identified as areas of weakness. Ratings for the other two reporting categories were mixed. Areas of strength were Knowledge of Government, Identifying Values and Value Conflicts, Making Inferences About Cultural Practices, Acceptance of Others, and the Survey Section, which includes items assessing Opinions About Rights of Citizens, Social Participation, and Leadership. The areas of weakness were Knowledge of Social Science Concepts, Work-Study Skills, Comprehension of Social Studies Text, and Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities. The two areas for which mixed ratings were obtained were Knowledge of Cultural Diversity and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.

2. When the strengths and weaknesses thus identified were related to the five goals in the framework, three goals appear to be general areas of strength. The general areas of strength are diversity, social values, and social participation. The goal which corresponds to the principal area of weakness is that of social sciences skills.

3. Comparison of scores on the CSST for students in urban, suburban, and rural areas reveals a pattern of slightly higher scores for students in suburban areas and medium-sized cities than for students in urban areas or rural areas. This finding is consistent with the pattern of performance in the basic skills areas, as revealed in other studies conducted by the California Assessment Program.

4. Results for the STEP social studies test indicate that the score of the median student in the California sample is at approximately the thirty-sixth percentile of the publisher's national norms. This score is well below the national average (fiftieth percentile).

5. Comparison of student performance on the STEP social studies test to the results of an earlier study conducted by the California Assessment Program indicates that the level of social studies learning by California seventh grade students is somewhat lower than the level of achievement in the basic skills of reading, language, and mathematics.

INTRODUCTION

Although numerous studies have highlighted recent trends in student achievement in the basic skills, no comparable information is available regarding student achievement in social studies. Little has been known about either the general level of social studies learning or particular areas of strength and weakness in social studies learning among California students.

The assessment of social studies learning of California seventh grade students was conducted to satisfy requirements of Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 139 of 1974. Under provisions of the resolution, the Department of Education was required to assess the general level of social studies learning based upon a sample of seventh grade students in California public schools. Other provisions of the legislation called for a comparison of the general level of social studies learning to those of other curriculum areas and a comparison of the relative level of social studies learning by students in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee was formed to assist in selecting topics to assess within social studies and in devising an overall strategy for the assessment. The committee recognized that there were two general approaches which could be followed: one approach was a comparison of the performance of California students to that of students nationwide on a standardized achievement test; a second approach was an examination of the performance of California students on specially devised tests in relation to performance standards established by subject area experts. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages.

The principal advantage of normative comparison on a standardized test is that the information obtained is straightforward and easy to interpret. A single score, however, does not permit identifying specific strengths and weaknesses within a curriculum area. Furthermore, items included on standardized tests are not necessarily relevant to California priorities for social studies instruction.

An assessment of California students' social studies learning to standards established by subject area experts would make it possible to devise items specifically related to California priorities for social studies education. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to set meaningful performance standards without any information about the actual performance of any group of students on the items. The social studies committee determined that the best assessment of social studies learning would include both a standardized test with national norms and a test designed in relation to California priorities for social studies education. The priorities would be drawn from the Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools, which was adopted by the State Board of Education.

The social studies assessment is not intended primarily as an evaluation of current social studies programs, which differ widely in content and goals. Rather, the assessment provides information regarding the performance of students in relation to national norms as well as in areas emphasized in

the framework at a time when the framework is only beginning to be implemented as a guideline for social studies education in California public schools. Results of the assessment will perhaps be most useful as a baseline against which to review progress in social studies learning over a period of time.

The Department of Education is very grateful to the Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee and to the students and local district personnel who participated in this assessment.

PROCEDURES

The Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee

Overall guidance and direction for the social studies assessment have been provided by members of the Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee. Members of the committee have been involved in determining areas for assessment within social studies; selecting, developing, and reviewing test items; and interpreting results of the assessment. Committee members were selected to represent a variety of agencies and areas of expertise, including school district curriculum specialists, teachers, offices of county superintendents, State Department of Education task forces, professional associations, and experts in the academic community. (Members of the advisory committee are listed in Appendix A.)

Determining Areas for Assessment: The Social Sciences Education Framework

The first task in planning the assessment was to determine the content areas to be covered within social studies. The Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools was selected as the guide for item selection and development. The framework sets out five major goals with subordinate program goals. The committee determined that items would be selected and classified in relation to the goals of the framework covering the following general areas:

I. Interdisciplinary Concepts
II. Social Sciences Skills - Intellectual, work-study, valuing, and social participation
III. Diversity - Appreciation of individual cultural differences and similarities
IV. Social Values
V. Social Participation

(The goals and program goals of the framework are attached as Appendix B to this report.)

The Social Sciences Education Framework is a policy statement of the California State Board of Education for social studies education in the California public schools. As such, it provides guidelines for the design of local district social studies curricula as well as serving as a basis for adoption of state textbooks in social studies.

The content areas encompassed by the framework include several areas of emphasis in addition to the knowledge and skills typically emphasized in social studies programs. Two emphases which distinguish the framework from other social studies programs are its interdisciplinary focus and its stress on growth in the areas of personal values, respect for cultural diversity, and social participation.

It was apparent to the committee that an assessment based on the framework would require an instrument especially tailored to the emphases of the frame-

work. Thus it was determined that an instrument would be constructed using the goals of the framework as a guide. A decision was made to review existing test items from various noncopyrighted sources for appropriateness and to construct additional items as needed.

Development of the California Social Studies Test

The California Social Studies Test (CSST) was constructed from items selected to match the goals of the framework and from items developed by members of the committee. During the summer of 1975 the items were field tested with seventh grade students to determine readability, clarity of directions, and other information pertaining to usefulness of the items. Critical reviews of the items were solicited from teachers concerning the importance and appropriateness of items.

During the fall of 1975, extensive revisions were made based on the field test results, the critical reviews received from teachers, and comments received from measurement specialists and reading specialists. Additional items were also developed at that time to cover areas which lacked sufficient items.

The CSST covers such a broad range of topics that a single score would be meaningless. Even the areas spanned by each of the five major goals of the framework are too broad and heterogeneous to provide overall scores that would be useful for a statewide review of social studies curricula. Consequently, items on the CSST were grouped into reporting categories which seemed on logical grounds to measure homogeneous content areas. An additional field test was conducted during December, 1975, to confirm the statistical integrity of the reporting categories. With a few additional modifications, the items and reporting categories then seemed adequate to serve as a basis for reporting results of the assessment.

Description of the California Social Studies Test

For purposes of test administration, the 208 items on the California Social Studies Test were distributed over five test forms. Items have been organized for reporting purposes into 10 reporting categories or item clusters with an additional set of survey items which are reported on an item by item basis. A brief description of each reporting category with an illustrative test item is presented in Table 1. The relationship between reporting categories of the CSST and the goals of the framework is also depicted in Table 1. Although there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the reporting categories and the goals, it can be seen that each reporting category emphasizes one or more of the goals. Interpretation of results of the assessment for any given goal in the framework must make reference to all of the reporting categories in which that goal is emphasized. For example, Goal I of the framework is emphasized in three reporting categories of the CSST. Therefore, interpretation of student performance on topics relating to Goal I should be based on results for all three reporting categories.

The reporting categories of the CSST also span the three general domains of knowledge, skills, and values. Interpretation of the results for the various

Table 1

Description of Reporting Categories of
the California Social Studies Test

Reporting Category	Description of Area Assessed	Number of Items	Framework Goal(s) Emphasized	Illustrative Test Item
1. Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	The student must demonstrate knowledge of disciplinary and interdisciplinary concepts in the social sciences.	14	I	Justice means that a. people are treated fairly under the law. b. people are allowed to do whatever they want. c. rich people shouldn't be arrested unless they commit very serious crimes. d. there should be different laws for different racial groups.
2. Knowledge of Government	The student must demonstrate general knowledge of government, including important aspects of state and federal governments.	21	I	The first 10 amendments of the United States Constitution are called the a. Preamble. b. Declaration. c. Bill of Rights. d. Articles of Confederation.
3. Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	The student must demonstrate knowledge of some of the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens, including rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.	12	IV	If you are arrested, you have all of the following rights EXCEPT a. the right to a speedy trial. b. the right to remain silent. c. the right to resist arrest. d. the right to talk to a lawyer.

Table 1 (cont.)

Reporting Category	Description of Area Assessed	Number of Items	Framework Goal(s) Emphasized	Illustrative Test Item
4. Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	The student must demonstrate knowledge of various cultural and ethnic groups.	24	I & III	Which of the following persons was a famous Black American? a. Theodore Roosevelt b. William McKinley c. Martin Luther King, Jr. d. Patrick Henry
5. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	The student must demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills such as discriminating statements of fact from statements of opinion, categorizing, economic reasoning, and so on.	21	II	People need water to live. Suppose a lot of water appeared on the desert where it had been dry before. Which of the following would be most likely to happen? a. People would start exploring for oil. b. There would be fewer rainy days. c. The price of the land would go up. d. The price of the land would go down.
6. Work-Study Skills	The student must demonstrate work-study skills such as reading charts, graphs and maps, identifying useful sources of information, and using an index.	17	II	Suppose someone wanted to know what had happened in our country or in the world within the last 24 hours. Which of the following would be a good way for the person to find out? a. Reading the daily newspaper b. Looking in an encyclopedia c. Looking in a history textbook d. Looking in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

Table 1 (cont.)

Reporting Category	Description of Area Assessed	Number of Items	Framework Goal(s) Emphasized	Illustrative Test Item
7. Comprehension of Social Studies Text	After reading a passage from a social studies text or a newspaper, the student must demonstrate comprehension of information presented in the passage.	16	II	According to the passage, the Mexican people were well able to live on what type of land? a. Great Plains b. Mountains c. Desert d. Coastal areas
8. Making Inferences about Cultural Practices	When presented information about a different culture, the student must make inferences from the material presented.	17	III & IV	Suppose a dictator comes into power in a country. He believes that all the people should obey him in everything. He believes that the whole nation is far more important than individual people. He is sure that individual freedom is not important, but the advancement of the country is. Because of the way he thinks, what do you think the dictator might do while he is in power? In the following items, decide whether each thing is likely to happen, or is <u>not</u> likely to happen. He will encourage good newspapers which give all points of view. a. Likely to happen b. Unlikely to happen

Table 1 (cont.)

Reporting Category	Description of Area Assessed	Number of Items	Framework Goal(s) Emphasized	Illustrative Test Item
9. Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	The student must demonstrate understanding of the implications of certain values and of value conflicts.	20	II & IV	In the past one hundred years we have made a lot of progress. Sometimes the progress has also had bad effects on the environment. Which of the following might be the best example of this? a. The space flights to the moon b. The use of DDT to spray food crops c. The discovery of penicillin and other miracle drugs d. The development of mass transportation systems
10. Acceptance of Others	The student's personal feelings of acceptance of other races, ethnic groups, and life styles are assessed.	15 (scaled items: scored with most accepting response coded as three and least accepting as zero)	III & IV	Mark: a if you strongly agree with the statement. b if you agree with the statement. c if you disagree with the statement. d if you strongly disagree with the statement. The study of other cultures helps us gain better understanding of all people and how they live. a b c d
11. Survey Section: Opinions about Rights of Citizens, Social Participation at School, Leadership at School and in the Community, Social Participation in the Community	The student's feelings, opinions, dispositions, and experiences in the areas of social participation and the rights of citizens are surveyed.	37	IV & V	When your class is working together to complete a project, the important people are the a. leaders. b. followers. c. leaders and the followers.

reporting categories may be facilitated by examining scores in relation to these three rubrics. The suggested grouping of reporting categories is as follows:

KNOWLEDGE
- Knowledge of Social Science Concepts
- Knowledge of Government
- Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities
- Knowledge of Cultural Diversity

SKILLS
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
- Work-Study Skills
- Comprehension of Social Studies Text
- Making Inferences about Cultural Practices

VALUES
- Identifying Values and Value Conflicts
- Acceptance of Others
- Survey Section:
  - Opinions about Rights of Citizens
  - Social Participation at School
  - Leadership at School and in the Community
  - Social Participation in the Community

Information was obtained from the December field test regarding validity of the CSST in relation to teachers' ratings of students on several dimensions. Teachers were asked to rate each student who participated in the field test on four dimensions: 1) academic achievement in social studies, 2) general reading ability, 3) study skills and work habits, and 4) citizenship and social participation at school. Students were rated as "below average," "about average," or "above average" on each of these dimensions. Correlation coefficients were then computed to ascertain the relationship between students' characteristics, as rated by their teachers, and students' scores on reporting categories of the CSST. The correlations are shown in Appendix C. All correlations were positive, with most falling in the moderate range.

The teacher rating dimension which showed the strongest relationship to scores on the CSST was that of general reading ability. The dimension which showed the weakest relationship to scores on the CSST was citizenship and social participation at school. These findings suggest that average or above average ability in reading may be required for optimal performance on the CSST. Although considerable effort was made to minimize the reading demands of CSST items, the concepts covered in some of the items required the use of vocabulary and diction which may have been difficult for some students. Another interpretation of the stronger correlation with reading ability stems from the use of the social sciences framework rather than other social studies programs as the guidelines for constructing the CSST. Many items included in the CSST measure knowledge or skills which may not be covered in typical elementary social studies programs. Therefore, superior performance on these items may be related to the student's disposition to read material over and above the material assigned in social studies classes.

Again, it should be noted that the assessment is not intended as an evaluation of existing social studies programs which may be based on goals different from the goals in the framework. The assessment is designed to be used as a point of departure for districts which wish to implement the framework as a guideline for their social studies program in the future.

Strategy for the Social Studies Assessment

A two-part strategy was developed for the social studies assessment. First, administration of the CSST to a statewide sample of seventh grade students would permit an analysis of areas of strength and weakness in students' social studies learning in relation to the framework. Second, the administration of a standardized social studies achievement test with national norms would provide an estimate of the overall level of social studies learning for California students. The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) (Series II) - Social Studies was the test selected for this latter purpose. Estimates of the overall reading and mathematics achievement of California seventh graders can be derived by using sixth grade test results from the California Assessment Program. A special equating study provides comparisons with national norms. With the available information, a rough comparison could be made between California students' overall level of learning in social studies and that of their learning in the basic skills in relation to national norms.

Selecting a Sample for the Assessment

The social studies assessment was based on a statewide sample of seventh grade students. In order to fulfill the legislative requirement for comparisons among urban, suburban, and rural areas, a stratified sample was drawn based on school location. To ensure that the sample would be proportionate to the total population in terms of the achievement level of students, the sample was also stratified with respect to student achievement. Information regarding school location and achievement was not available for the seventh grade but was available from the California Assessment Program (CAP) for all schools with sixth grades. The CAP's sixth grade school location code and its sixth grade reading scores were used in this stratification process. For schools with a seventh grade that did not have a sixth grade, the necessary information was estimated on the basis of their respective feeder schools.

School Location. All schools with sixth grades participating in the California Assessment Program have a school location code based on five major population groups:

A. City of more than 300,000
B. City of more than 100,000 but less than 300,000
C. Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) of more than 25,000 but less than 100,000
D. Community (incorporated as a city or town or an unincorporated area) of 2,500-25,000
E. Rural area; less than 2,500 population

The population category of the feeder school was used to estimate the population of the surrounding area for a school with a seventh grade but no sixth grade. In those instances where a seventh grade had more than one feeder school, the population category of the feeder school contributing the largest number of students was used.

Achievement. Reading scores from the California Assessment Program were used as the achievement indicator. These scores were available for all schools with sixth grades for the 1974-75 school year. For those schools with a seventh grade and no sixth grade and which had more than one feeder school, achievement was estimated by weighting the scores of the feeder schools by the number of students contributed by the feeder school to a given seventh grade class. The resulting distribution of estimated seventh grade reading scores was divided into quintiles.

Sampling Procedure

The five location codes and the five achievement levels created a sampling matrix of 25 cells. The sampling design called for an overall sample of approximately four percent of seventh grade students. Based on the schools assigned to each cell, the total number of students in that cell was determined, and the number of students constituting a four percent sample was established. A cluster sampling framework was designed whereby schools within each cell were sampled at random until the desired number of students was obtained. The procedure called for testing all seventh grade students in each school included in the sample.

An additional aspect of the sampling design is the manner in which the CSST and STEP tests were assigned to students. It was decided to conduct testing by classes, and all students in a given classroom would complete the same test. Districts were requested to provide the Department with a list of classes so that class packs could be prepared. Teachers were instructed to distribute the tests to students in the order in which they were packaged. A matrix sampling technique was employed with the CSST, whereby items were distributed over five test forms, and each student took only a portion of the total test. The distribution procedures insured that the five forms would be assigned randomly to students. A total of 1200 students were to receive the STEP test, and a systematic sampling plan provided for the random assignment of the STEP test to classes.

Description of the Sample

As in most large-scale research projects, the number of students who completed tests in the social studies assessment departs somewhat from the number of students originally selected for the sample. Information is presented in Table 2 comparing the actual sample to the desired sample. On the whole, the discrepancies do not seem so large as to jeopardize any inferences which might have been made regarding student achievement.

A comparison between the number of students who completed tests and the number desired in the sample for each test is shown in Table 2. The sample is

slightly larger than expected for the CSST and smaller than expected for the STEP social studies test. The 11,645 students included in the CSST sample were from 65 schools in 59 districts, and the districts were located in 35 counties. The 1,011 students in the STEP social studies sample were from 34 schools in 32 districts in 21 counties. Districts and schools included in the samples are shown in Appendix D.

Because inferences will be made from the performance of students in the sample regarding the level of social studies learning in locations of different population size, it is important to check the CSST sample for its representativeness of the various location groups. In Table 3 a comparison is made between the distribution of students in the sample among the various school location groups and the distribution of the estimated total seventh grade enrollment.

Table 2

Comparison of Actual Sample Size to Expected Sample Size

Test	Actual Sample Size	Expected Sample Size
CSST	11,645	11,600
STEP Social Studies	1,011	1,200

Table 3

Comparison of Seventh Grade Students Taking CSST with Distribution of Student Enrollment

Data Being Compared	Percent of Seventh Grade Students, by Estimated Population of Surrounding Area				
	More than 300,000	100,000 to 300,000	25,000 to 100,000	2,500 to 25,000	less than 2,500
Actual sample of students taking CSST	26	19	33	17	5
Estimated total seventh grade enrollment	22	15	39	19	6

Student Performance on the CSST

Student performance on the CSST was tabulated in terms of the percent of items answered correctly for each reporting category. The percent correct score for a given set of items is obtained by dividing the number of correct responses to all the items by the total number of responses to these items. For example, if three students took a test with 10 items and each of the three answered five of the questions correctly, the number of correct responses would be 15, the total number of responses would be 30, and the percent correct would be 50. In other words, the average student answered 50 percent of the questions correctly or, on the average, 50 percent of the questions were answered correctly.

The percent correct scores are shown in Table 4 for all reporting categories of the CSST except Acceptance of Others and the Survey Section. The nature of the items in these two reporting categories makes them not amenable to computation of percent correct scores. Findings for Acceptance of Others and for the Survey Section are presented separately.

Student performance on the CSST was reviewed by members of the Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee on an item-by-item basis for all reporting categories except those in the area of values. Judgments were made as to whether performance on the item statewide was "adequate" or "in need of improvement." In forming their judgments, some committee members were asked to indicate the percent correct score for each item which they would consider adequate. Other committee members were asked to examine the actual percent correct score and determine whether it was adequate. The committee's judgments were based on consideration of the importance of each item, the difficulty of the item and the age of students taking the test. Judgments were not based exclusively on percent correct scores.

The judgments by the committee were tabulated for all the items in a given reporting category and are presented in Table 5 in terms of the percent of items within the reporting category for which performance was judged adequate. The percent correct scores are between 50 and 70 on the average. However, scores for particular items vary widely from these average scores. Specific findings for each reporting category follow:

Knowledge of Social Science Concepts. The percent correct score, statewide, for Knowledge of Social Science Concepts was 56.2. The committee judged performance adequate on only 36% of the items in this reporting category. The items cover a broad range of concepts in the social sciences; and, in most instances, they require the student to demonstrate understanding of the concept by selecting the response option which gives an example of the concept or which defines the concept. The committee was pleased that 88% of the students recognized that "justice" means that "people are treated fairly under the law." However, performance was judged in need of improvement when only 38% recognized a "constitution" as "a set of rules on which the laws must be based." Thirty-four percent thought that a "constitution" was "all of the laws and rules which people must obey," and 15% indicated that it was "a group of people who make the laws."

Table 4

Statewide Performance of Students, by Reporting Category, on the California Social Studies Test

Reporting Category	Percent Correct Score	Measurement Error of Percent Correct Score [a]
Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	56.2	0.3
Knowledge of Government	62.0	0.1
Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	52.8	0.4
Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	56.2	0.0
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	62.8	0.3
Work-Study Skills	61.2	0.2
Comprehension of Social Studies Text	64.4	0.2
Making Inferences about Cultural Practices	71.3	0.3
Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	66.7	0.5

[a] The measurement error describes the precision of the percent correct score. The score for each reporting category is not a precise number, but rather one that could have been a little higher or lower; i.e., plus or minus the value of the measurement error. In computing the measurement error, procedures appropriate to multiple matrix sampling were applied.

Table 5

Committee Judgments of Performance, by Reporting Category

Reporting Category	Number of Items	Percent of Items on Which Performance Was Judged to Be Adequate
Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	14	36
Knowledge of Government	21	62
Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	12	25
Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	20	50
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	21	48
Work-Study Skills	17	35
Comprehension of Social Studies Text	16	31
Making Inferences about Cultural Practices	17	65

In the area of societal concepts, only 24% of the students accurately identified "The Chinese" as "an example of an ethnic group in the United States." Thirty-four percent thought that "people on welfare" constituted an ethnic group, and 24% selected "all the people who live in the same town" as the answer to this item. The Committee rated performance on this item as "in need of improvement."

Other items for which performance was judged "in need of improvement" included the concepts of "scarcity," "prejudice," "culture," "custom," "natural resource," and "cultural diversity." Concepts included in items for which performance was rated "adequate" included "multiple causation" and "interdependence."

Knowledge of Government. The committee was fairly pleased with overall performance on the items in Knowledge of Government. Performance was rated as adequate for 62% of the items in this reporting category. In general, students demonstrated more knowledge about the federal government than about California government. The committee was satisfied that students demonstrated understanding of the main purpose of the Declaration of Independence as well as the ability to interpret a passage from the Declaration.

Students were less successful in demonstrating knowledge of the structure of government. For example, in one item students were informed that the Congress of the United States is made up of two parts and that one part is the House of Representatives. When asked to identify the other part, only 48% accurately selected the "Senate." Thirty-one percent incorrectly identified the other part as the "Supreme Court." Similarly, in another item, 33% indicated that the "Supreme Court" is "the branch of government which makes laws for the state of California." On the other hand, when asked "which group can rule whether a law passed by the California Legislature agrees with the state constitution," only 41% accurately selected the "Supreme Court." Twenty-five percent thought that the Senate performed this function, and 23% selected "Governor" as the answer to this item.

Less than one-half of the students (43%) knew that the kind of government we have in the United States is a "representative democracy." Twenty-eight percent selected "parliamentary government" as the answer to this item.

Other items for which performance was rated "adequate" included knowledge of facts about government, such as the role of a judge in court, the role of a mayor, and the identities of the first president and current president of the United States.

Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities. In the area of students' knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, performance was judged adequate on only 25% of the items. The committee did feel that these items were difficult, on the whole, for seventh graders, and they adjusted their expectations accordingly. Even so, the committee was dissatisfied that only 42% of the students indicated that "making an effort to know what the laws are" is a responsibility of a U. S. citizen, while 43% identified "accepting all laws of our country without questioning them or trying to change them" as a responsibility of a citizen. However, the committee was pleased that a majority of students (65%) recognized that a responsibility of a citizen is "to learn about people running for office and to vote."

Students' understanding of the rights and freedoms of U. S. citizens was judged by the committee as weak. Twenty-eight percent of students indicated that "a law can be passed and enforced" in this country which "says that a particular person must go to jail"; 27% indicated that a law can be passed and enforced which "punishes someone for things which he or she did before the law was passed."

Knowledge of Cultural Diversity. Judgments of performance on items in this reporting category were mixed, with performance on 50% of these items judged as adequate. A majority of students (68%) recognized the Spanish influence on names of places in California. This reporting category included several items assessing knowledge about Latin America. Performance on most of the items pertaining to Latin America was judged as needing improvement. For example, 24% of students incorrectly identified Latin America as "a large nation," while only 53% accurately identified it as "a region south of the United States."

The committee judged performance adequate on items pertaining to knowledge about blacks or Negroes in America. Seventy-nine percent of students accurately identified Martin Luther King, Jr., as a "famous black American." Seventy-four percent indicated that the "black or Negro" is the largest non-white group in the United States."

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving. Student performance was judged as adequate for 48% of the items assessing critical thinking and problem solving in social studies. The percent correct score for these items statewide was 62.8. The committee's ratings were mixed on items assessing students' proficiency in discriminating between statements of fact and statements of opinion, with performance on about half these items rated as "adequate." Judgments were also mixed on items assessing economic reasoning. The committee was satisfied, on the whole, with students' demonstrated ability to classify words or objects based on a common characteristic.

Work-Study Skills. The committee found performance "adequate" for only 35% of the items in the area of Work-Study Skills in social studies. Performance was particularly weak in map reading, with many students unable to determine directions of the compass in moving from one location to another on a map. On the four items related to map reading, the percent correct scores were between 48% and 68%. Ratings were mixed in the areas of graph and chart reading and determining appropriate sources of information. For example, most students (78%) recognized that the daily newspaper was a good source of information about what has "happened in our country or in the world within the last 24 hours." However, the committee was dissatisfied that only 30% of the students felt that "a talk with the striking men" was the best source of information on the reasons for a strike by truck drivers, while 46% felt that "a speech by one of the managers of the trucking company" would be the best source of information.

An area of strength within Work-Study Skills was demonstrated on items assessing use of an index. Performance was rated "adequate" on two of the three items assessing this skill.

Comprehension of Social Studies Text. Student performance for only 31% of the items relating to reading comprehension of passages in textbooks and

newspapers was rated by the committee as "adequate." The ability to derive main ideas from written material is an important skill in social studies learning. Students appeared to be somewhat more successful in comprehending passages from the newspaper as compared with passages from social studies textbooks used in California public schools.

Making Inferences About Cultural Practices. A majority of the items (65%) in Making Inferences About Cultural Practices were judged by the committee as revealing adequate performance. In this reporting category students were presented various hypothetical situations pertaining to other cultures and were asked several questions about each situation which assessed their abilities to make inferences about probable similarities and differences between cultures and to infer particular practices which are likely to follow from a given set of values within a culture. For the illustrative item shown in Table 1, 81% of the students selected the correct answer: "Men who like rough and dangerous sports and who like warfare with other villages."

Identifying Values and Value Conflicts. The percent correct score for Identifying Values and Value Conflicts was 66.7. The committee did not rate the adequacy of performance on each of these items because some of the items call for value judgments to be made by students and do not have "correct" answers as such. In general the committee felt that the responses to these items revealed an acceptable level of sensitivity to issues involving values and value conflicts. The committee was pleased in view of the fact that values are only beginning to be emphasized in social studies programs.

Acceptance of Others. Items in this reporting category are attitudinal items constructed with the response options to each item on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Student responses were tabulated with a score of zero points designating the most negative or unaccepting response and a score of three points designating the response most accepting of others. An average score for this reporting category was obtained by averaging the score for all items in the reporting category and for all students responding to the items. The statewide average, as shown in Table 6, was 2.14. In other words, the average response to items in this reporting category reveals an attitude which is in the direction of being accepting of others rather than unaccepting. However, this attitude of acceptance does not closely approach its maximum positive value of 3.00.

The committee did not establish a level of expectation for student responses to items in Acceptance of Others, nor did the committee make judgments, on an item-by-item basis, as to whether the observed responses were "adequate" or "in need of improvement." Nevertheless, the committee was pleased, overall, with the responses to these items. For example, 25% of the students disagreed and 55% strongly disagreed with the statement: "People of different races and nationalities should go to different schools." Twenty-six percent agreed and 53% strongly agreed with the statement: "People should be free to live any way they want to as long as they do not interfere with the rights of other people."

Survey Section. Items in the Survey Section assessed students' opinions, attitudes, and self-reported actions in several areas: Opinions About Rights of

Table 6

Average Scores on Acceptance of Others, Statewide, and According to Sex and School Location

Type of Data	Statewide	Data, by Sex		Data by Estimated Population of School Location				
		Girls	Boys	More than 300,000	100,000 to 300,000	25,000 to 100,000	2,500 to 25,000	less than 2,500
Average score (range = 0-3)	2.14	2.19	2.10	2.13	2.13	2.16	2.15	2.12
Measurement error	.001	.001	.001	.002	.003	.002	.004	.024

Citizens, Social Participation at School, Leadership at School and in the Community, and Social Participation in the Community. These items had no "correct" answer, as such; therefore, responses could not be totaled and reduced to a single average value as was done for the other reporting categories. The percent of students selecting each response option to each item in the Survey Section is presented in Appendices E and F. Although the committee did not make judgments about student performance on these items, summary observations were made about performance on some individual items and groups of items.

Student responses to several questions pertaining to opinions about the rights of U.S. citizens are shown in Appendix E. Although the committee felt that the distribution of responses generally was well within the range of reasonable differences of opinion, the distribution of responses to item three in Appendix G raises some concern about students' belief in freedom of the press. In response to the question "Do you feel that newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print things which you do not agree with?" 28% indicated "no," and 22% indicated "not sure." Responses to item four provoked some concern about students' belief in the rights of the accused as guaranteed under the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. When asked whether people, under the threat of severe punishment, should be made to give evidence that shows whether or not they are guilty of a criminal act, 21% of students responded "yes" and 24% responded "not sure."

Most of the items in the Survey Section were designed to assess the area of citizenship and social participation. This area was extremely difficult to assess, and the committee found very little guidance for making an assessment of it in its review of existing measures. Nevertheless, the committee felt that topics relating to Goal V of the Social Sciences Education Framework were of such overwhelming importance in social studies education that an attempt should be made to devise some assessment items for this area, if only to highlight some significant aspects of the general area of social participation.

The two major areas in which school age children have an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to democratic social participation are the school and the community. Responses to the items which the committee devised to assess social participation are presented in Appendix F. As in the case of other topics pertaining to values, the committee did not establish specific expectations for students' responses, nor did the committee rate performance as "adequate" or "in need of improvement."

In Appendix F-1 student responses are given for items designed to measure students' feelings about and self-reports of social participation at school. In items 1-6 students were given several hypothetical situations in a school setting and were asked how they would behave in each situation. For each item one of the response options was designated as the most "democratic" or as providing the solution which allows participation by the most people. When these items were scored in this way, the average percent "correct" value was 69.4. Items 7-10, which have been included in Appendix F-1, presented some of the same situations but asked students what they should do in the situation. When these four items were scored for the most "democratic" solution, the average percent "correct" value was 73.8. Students were only slightly more disposed to select the most "democratic" solution when asked

what they should do as opposed to what they would do. On the whole, the committee was pleased with students' responses to these items.

In Appendix F-2 responses are shown for several items pertaining to leadership at school and in the community. And in Appendix F-3 responses are given for items assessing students' social participation in the community. The committee determined that the main value of these items was the descriptive information obtained about students. On the whole, the committee felt that an acceptable level of social participation was suggested by these items.

Differences Between Girls' and Boys' Responses on the CSST

In order to ascertain whether there was any difference between girls and boys in the pattern of responses to items on the CSST, the average percent correct values were computed separately for each sex. These values are shown in Table 7 for all reporting categories except Acceptance of Others and the Survey Section. Scores for girls and boys on Acceptance of Others are given in Table 6. Responses by sex are not presented for the Survey Section.

Scores for girls tended to be slightly higher than those for boys, but in no case was the difference in scores large. On Knowledge of Social Science Concepts, Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, and Comprehension of Social Studies Text, the average score for girls was three or more percentage points higher than the score for boys, but these differences were indicative only of a slight trend. On Acceptance of Others the average score for girls was also slightly higher than that for boys.

Separate scores for girls and for boys were computed for those items in the Survey Section in which students were asked what they would do and what they should do in given situations. The percent "correct" scores were substantially higher for girls than for boys on these items. When asked what they would do, the average score for girls was 73.7 while the score for boys was only 65.2. For items in which students were asked what they should do, the scores were 78.2 for girls and 69.4 for boys. Although the girls' score was higher than the boys' score for both sets of items, the pattern of responses was similar, with a higher average score for both sexes on the items asking what they should do as opposed to what they would do.

Responses on the CSST According to School Location

Percent correct scores were computed for the five school location categories and are shown in Table 8 for all reporting categories except Acceptance of Others and the topics in the Survey Section. Scores for the five school location categories on Acceptance of Others are given in Table 6. Responses are not presented for the various school location categories for items in the Survey Section.

The analysis by school location categories reveals slightly higher scores for students in schools classified as serving communities with populations of 25,000 to 100,000 and of 2,500 to 25,000 than for students in the other school location categories. Communities in these categories are mostly suburban areas and medium-sized cities. Knowledge of Cultural Diversity is the

reporting category for which the greatest range in scores across school locations was found. It is interesting to note that a similar pattern in performance by students in urban, suburban, and rural areas has been found in studies conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Performance on the STEP Social Studies Test

The raw score of the median student on the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) (Series II) - Social Studies test was 24. However, this score cannot be entered directly into the publisher's norms table to determine a national percentile rank because no midyear norms are available for this test. But the percentile rank may be estimated by interpolating a value between the fall and spring norms. By this process the median student in the California sample for the STEP social studies test is estimated to be at approximately the thirty-sixth percentile nationally. In other words, the score of the median California student which was higher than those of 50% of students in the California sample was only higher than the scores of 36% of the students in the publisher's national sample.

Table 7

Performance of Girls and Boys, by Reporting Category,
on the California Social Studies Test

Reporting Category	Percent Correct Scores and Measurement Errors of Percent Correct Scores [b]		
	Girls	Boys	Difference
Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	58.5 (0.3)	54.6 (0.1)	3.9
Knowledge of Government	62.1 (0.2)	62.2 (0.0)	0.1
Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	53.3 (0.4)	52.9 (0.1)	0.4
Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	56.6 (0.0)	56.4 (0.0)	0.2
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	64.5 (0.3)	61.4 (0.1)	3.1
Work-Study Skills	61.0 (0.3)	61.3 (0.1)	0.3
Comprehension of Social Studies Text	66.1 (0.2)	63.0 (0.0)	3.1
Making Inferences about Cultural Practices	72.2 (0.3)	70.8 (0.1)	1.4
Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	67.3 (0.5)	66.2 (0.1)	1.1

[b] Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

Table 8

Performance According to School Location, by Reporting Category, on the California Social Studies Test

Reporting Category	Percent Correct Scores and Measurement Errors of Percent Correct Scores, by Estimated Population of School Location				
	More than 300,000	100,000 to 300,000	25,000 to 100,000	2,500 to 25,000	less than 2,500
Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	55.2 (0.8)	54.8 (1.2)	58.3 (0.7)	57.5 (1.4)	53.6 (5.1)
Knowledge of Government	60.4 (0.4)	60.1 (0.5)	64.1 (0.3)	63.7 (0.6)	61.5 (2.3)
Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	51.2 (1.0)	51.5 (1.5)	54.2 (0.9)	54.6 (1.8)	54.3 (6.5)
Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	54.9 (0.1)	53.8 (0.1)	58.3 (0.1)	58.9 (0.1)	52.8 (0.5)
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	60.8 (0.8)	61.5 (1.1)	64.8 (0.7)	65.0 (1.4)	61.1 (4.9)
Work-Study Skills	58.7 (0.7)	58.9 (0.9)	64.2 (0.5)	63.4 (1.2)	58.7 (4.1)
Comprehension of Social Studies Text	62.3 (0.6)	62.9 (0.8)	66.1 (0.5)	66.9 (1.0)	65.5 (3.6)
Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	64.6 (1.3)	65.4 (1.8)	68.6 (1.1)	68.4 (2.2)	67.1 (7.9)

[c] Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 139 of 1974 is specific with respect to several provisions regarding the social studies assessment. First, the general level of social studies learning by California seventh grade students was to be assessed. Second, the general level of learning in social studies was to be compared to other areas of the curriculum. And, finally, the assessment was to determine the relative level of social studies learning among students in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Assessment of the General Level of Social Studies Learning

The strategy for the social studies assessment consisted of administering two different instruments. The STEP social studies test was selected as the standardized test which related most closely to priorities for social studies education as set forth in the Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools. This test was administered to assess the performance of California students in relation to students nationwide. The California Social Studies Test was devised especially for this assessment to identify particular areas of strength and weakness in students' learning.

Assessment of the general level of social studies learning can be made by considering the results of the STEP social studies test in conjunction with the California Social Studies Test, which was designed to assess performance in areas described in the social sciences framework.

Analysis of Performance on the STEP Social Studies Test. The median pupil in the California sample that took the STEP social studies test was estimated to be at approximately the thirty-sixth percentile of the publisher's national norms, and it is likely that California students in general are performing well below the publisher's national average. Topics covered on the STEP test are in the general area of social studies skills.

Analysis of Performance on the CSST. Since the CSST items were selected and developed specifically for the purpose of this assessment, there was no empirical basis for establishing an expected level of performance or for comparing the performance of California students to that of any other group. It was necessary, therefore, to rely on judgments of subject area experts to determine whether the measured level of performance by California students on these items was "adequate."

The Social Studies Assessment Advisory Committee's judgments of performance on the CSST were summarized in the previous section for the various reporting categories and highlighted with student responses to some illustrative items. Student performance was not judged to be uniformly adequate or uniformly in need of improvement for any single reporting category. For several reporting categories, however, the weight of the ratings, on an item-by-item basis, was strongly in one direction or the other. Those reporting categories for which more than 60% of the items were judged as showing adequate performance

have been identified as areas of strength. Reporting categories for which fewer than 40% of the items were rated as showing adequate performance have been identified as areas of weakness. The reporting categories thus designated are shown in Table 9 in relation to the five goals in the social sciences framework. Some reporting categories are shown twice in Table 9 because two framework goals were emphasized in them.

Overall, five reporting categories were identified as areas of strength and four as areas of weakness. The committee's mixed ratings on two reporting categories prevented their being designated either as areas of strength or as areas of weakness. For three reporting categories the committee did not rate performance on an item-by-item basis. However, since the committee was generally pleased with students' responses in these reporting categories, the three areas are shown in Table 9 as areas of strength. These three are (1) Identifying Values and Value Conflicts, (2) Acceptance of Others, and (3) Survey Section, which includes Opinions About the Rights of Citizens, Social Participation at School, Leadership at School and in the Community, and Social Participation in the Community.

With respect to Goal I of the framework, Knowledge of Government was identified as an area of strength, and Knowledge of Social Science Concepts was identified as an area of weakness. While students' mastery of a specific set of social science concepts is not in itself an essential goal of social studies education, understanding of general social science concepts is an important tool for later learning.

One area of strength and two areas of weakness were identified within Goal II of the framework. Work-Study Skills and Comprehension of Social Studies Text were areas of general weakness. Skills in determining main ideas from written materials and in deriving information from maps, graphs, and other reference materials are extremely important in social studies.

Goal III, which pertains to cultural diversity, appears to be an area in which performance was generally strong. Making Inferences About Cultural Practices, a reporting category which contains many Goal III items, was identified as an area of strength. Acceptance of Others was also considered a general area of strength.

Items relating to Goal IV, or values, were heavily represented in four reporting categories, which were classified as general areas of strength. However, students' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship was identified as a definite area of weakness. Many California seventh grade students were unaware of some of the fundamental rights and responsibilities which accompany U.S. citizenship.

All items relating to Goal V, or social participation, were included in the Survey Section, which was classified as a general area of strength. The areas assessed were Social Participation at School, Leadership at School and in the Community, and Social Participation in the Community.

In summary, the general level of social studies learning of California seventh grade students was below the national norm on a standardized test

Table 9

Reporting Categories on the CSST Identified as Areas of Strength and Areas of Weakness

Framework Goal	Ratings of Performance on Reporting Category		
	Strength	Mixed Ratings	Weakness
I. Interdisciplinary Concepts	Knowledge of Government	Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	Knowledge of Social Science Concepts
II. Social Sciences Skills	Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Work-Study Skills Comprehension of Social Studies Text
III. Diversity	Making Inferences About Cultural Practices Acceptance of Others	Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	
IV. Social Values	Making Inferences About Cultural Practices Identifying Values and Value Conflicts Acceptance of Others Survey Section: Opinions About Rights of Citizens		Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities
V. Social Participation	Survey Section: Social Participation and Leadership		

of social studies achievement. The analysis of performance in relation to California priorities for social studies education reveals a mixture of specific strengths and weaknesses. The area of greatest weakness appears to be social studies skills, or Goal II of the framework.

Areas of relative strength are cultural diversity, values, and social participation, which correspond to Goals III, IV, and V of the framework. The committee was generally pleased with the students' level of maturity, as indicated by responses to items assessing attitudes, opinions, and personal actions.

Assessment of the Level of Learning in Social Studies Relative to the Basic Skills

Comparisons between the general level of learning in social studies and the general level of learning in basic skills areas can be approximated by examining results of the STEP social studies test in relation to the findings of a special study conducted by the California Assessment Program. Information is available for California sixth grade pupils indicating that the score of the median California pupil is at the 48th percentile in reading, the 43rd percentile in language, and the 44th percentile in arithmetic. These percentile ranks were determined during the 1974-75 school year when a special study using the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills was conducted.

Even though this special study was conducted with sixth grade pupils during the year previous to the social studies assessment, it is reasonable to assume that the performance of California seventh grade students in the basic skills areas was probably slightly lower than the national norm or 50th percentile. Thus, the level of achievement in social studies by California seventh graders, estimated to be at approximately the 36th percentile nationally, appears to be somewhat lower than their overall level of achievement in the basic skills.

Comparison of Social Studies Learning in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Areas

The average percent correct values found for the five school location categories revealed a pattern of slightly higher scores on the CSST for students in suburban areas and medium-sized cities than for students in urban areas or rural areas.

The pattern of scores for students in urban, suburban, and rural communities was consistent across most reporting categories of the CSST. It is interesting to note that other studies conducted by the California Assessment Program and by the National Assessment of Educational Progress have revealed a similar pattern of performance on tests of basic skills for students in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Summary

In summary, analysis of student performance on the CSST revealed five areas of strength and four areas of weakness. Areas of strength were Knowledge of Government, Identifying Values and Value Conflicts, Making Inferences about Cultural Practices, Acceptance of Others, and the Survey Section, which includes items assessing opinions about rights of citizens, social participation, and leadership. Areas of weakness were Knowledge of Social Science Concepts, Work-Study Skills, Comprehension of Social Studies Text, and Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities.

When the areas of strength and weakness are related to the five goals of the social studies framework, three goals appear to be general areas of strength, and one goal appears to be a general area of weakness. The three general areas of strength are diversity, social values, and social participation. The general area of weakness is social science skills.

California students performed below the national average on the STEP social studies test. Performance in social studies is somewhat lower than the level of performance on the basic skills. The topics included in the STEP test correspond to social science skills which was the general area of weakness identified on the CSST.

Scores for students in suburban communities and medium-sized cities are slightly higher than scores for students in urban and rural communities.

APPENDIX A

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Barbara Brandes, Item development, data analysis, and report preparation

James Fulton, Early phases of item selection and development

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APPENDIX B

Goals of Social Sciences Education in California
(From Social Sciences Education Framework for California Public Schools p. 3)

In kindergarten through grade twelve, students will be provided programs in the social sciences which will be directed toward the achievement of civic competence. The social sciences programs will be planned to:

Goal I. Enable students to develop understandings based on data, generalizations, and interdisciplinary and disciplinary concepts drawn from the various social sciences, including anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Goal II. Enable students to develop and practice a variety of intellectual and work-study skills appropriate to the social sciences.

Goal III. Enable and encourage students to understand and respect individual and cultural differences and similarities.

Goal IV. Enable students to reflect on society's values and encourage each individual to develop and clarify a personal set of values.

Goal V. Enable students to participate in activities in the society as individuals and as members of groups.

APPENDIX B (Cont.)

Goal I--Interdisciplinary Concepts

The social sciences program in kindergarten through grade twelve will enable students to develop understandings based on data, generalizations, and interdisciplinary and disciplinary concepts drawn from the various social sciences, including anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Program Goals

1. Help students to understand selected examples of interdisciplinary concepts through studies of human experience.

2. Help students to acquire concepts derived from the particular disciplines in the social sciences.

3. Help students to become aware of the processes by which the particular disciplines derive their concepts, such as observation, data gathering, classification, interpretation, inference, extrapolation, hypothesis construction and testing, theory construction and testing (content, validity), and prediction.

4. Help students to use the data from which concepts have been derived and to develop and test understandings based on data.

5. Help students to make generalizations within the context of studies of selected aspects of human experience.

6. Help students to develop valid conceptual schemes which they may employ in furthering their understandings of aspects of human experience, such as culture, belief systems, justice, and representative explanations of human origins.

APPENDIX B (Cont.)

Goal II--Social Sciences Skills

The social sciences program in kindergarten through grade twelve will enable students to develop and practice a variety of intellectual and work-study skills appropriate to the social sciences.

Program Goals

1. Help students develop and use the skills involved in critical thinking.
2. Help students develop and use valuing skills that are useful in the processes of recognizing and clarifying problems as well as managing and resolving them.
3. Help students develop and use creative ways to solve problems.
4. Help students develop and use work-study skills.
5. Encourage students to become increasingly self-directing.

APPENDIX B (Cont.)

Goal III--Diversity: Similarities and Differences

The social sciences program in kindergarten through grade twelve will enable and encourage students to understand and respect individual and cultural differences and similarities.

Program Goals

1. Help students understand and appreciate the world as a multiracial, multicultural, multilingual, and multinational phenomenon.

2. Help students understand and appreciate the United States as a multiracial, multilingual, and multicultural society.

3. Help students understand and appreciate universal and/or alternative ideas about beauty, ideological beliefs, sex roles, moral standards, and value systems by means of an equal and fair presentation of information on various civilizations, social units, and ethnic/minority groups.

4. Help students understand and appreciate the wide diversity of occupational choices available to them, the ways in which individuals make these choices and the necessity that occupational choices not be limited because of sexual, racial, or ethnic stereotypes.

5. Help students to recognize and avoid behavior and attitudes based on prejudices toward sexual, ethnic, racial, political, economic, and religious groups.

6. Help students develop self-esteem and pride through an understanding and appreciation of all units of human organization: world organizations, nation-states, ethnic/racial groups, entrepreneurial and labor groups, kin groups, and families.

APPENDIX B (Cont.)

Goal IV--Social Values

The social sciences program in kindergarten and grades one through twelve will enable students to reflect on their society's values and encourage each individual to develop and clarify a personal set of values.

Program Goals

1. Help students become aware of their own value positions and the positions held by other individuals and groups.

2. Help students develop feelings of self-worth and confidence in their own capabilities.

3. Help students develop an appreciation of and a concern for all living things.

4. Help students to see that controversies are usually related to value differences or interpretations.

5. Help students understand and appreciate the rights, privileges, and duties of citizenship in a democracy.

APPENDIX B (Cont.)

Goal V--Social Participation

The social sciences program in kindergarten and grades one through twelve will enable students to participate in activities in the society as individuals and as members of groups.

Program Goals

1. Help students analyze social situations, determine value issues, and prepare appropriate solutions upon which the students are willing to act.

2. Assist students to use their knowledge and intellectual skills effectively in participating in civic and other activities.

3. Help students develop and use positive interpersonal-relationship skills in social activities.

4. Provide students with opportunities to initiate and to participate in a variety of social activities encompassing several social environments.

APPENDIX C

Correlations Between Teacher Ratings and Student Scores
on Reporting Categories of the California Social Studies Test (Field Test)

Reporting Categories of the California Social Studies Test	Correlations by Teacher Rating Dimensions			
	Academic Achievement in Social Studies	General Reading Ability	Study Skills and Work Habits	Citizenship and Social Participation at School
Knowledge of Social Science Concepts	.25	.32	.15	.14
Knowledge of Government	.40	.42	.36	.27
Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	.30	.37	.28	.24
Knowledge of Cultural Diversity	.27	.30	.25	.14
Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving	.42	.44	.23	.08
Work-Study Skills	.39	.52	.31	.23
Reading Comprehension in Social Studies	.48	.60	.47	.31
Making Inferences About Cultural Practices	.29	.33	.21	.07
Identifying Values and Value Conflicts	.25	.38	.28	.08
Acceptance of Others	.11	.09	.04	.05
Survey Section				

APPENDIX D

Districts and Schools Involved in Social Studies Assessment

County	District	School
Alameda	Fremont Unified	John M. Horner Junior High
	Hayward Unified	La Vista Junior High
	Oakland Unified	Havenscourt Junior High
Amador	Jackson Unified	Jackson Elementary
Colusa	Colusa Unified	Colusa Junior High
Contra Costa	Antioch Unified	Antioch Junior High
El Dorado	Pollock Pines Elementary	Pinewood Elementary
Fresno	Orange Center Elementary	Orange Center Elementary
	Teague Elementary	Teague Elementary
Glenn	Orland Joint Union Elementary	Price Intermediate
Imperial	Holtville Unified	Holtville Junior High
	Seeley Union Elementary	Seeley Elementary
Inyo	Bishop Union Elementary	Home Street Elementary
Kern	Bakersfield City Elementary	Sierra Elementary
Kings	Hanford Elementary	Wilson Elementary
Los Angeles	Alhambra City Elementary	Monterey Highlands Elementary
	Compton Unified	Vanguard Junior High
	Hermosa Beach City Elementary	Hermosa Beach Middle
	Keppel Union Elementary	Almondale Elementary
	Long Beach Unified	Hughes Junior High
	Los Angeles Unified	Gompers Junior High
		Parkman Junior High
		Sutter Junior High
	Mountain View Elementary	Charles T. Kranz Intermediate
	Redondo Beach City Elementary	Hillcrest Intermediate
	Torrance Unified	Torrance Elementary
		Grace Wright Elementary
	Wiseburn Elementary	Dana Elementary
Marin	Bolinas-Stinson Elementary	Bolinas-Stinson Elementary
	Dixie Elementary	Miller Creek Intermediate
Mariposa	Mariposa County Unified	Mariposa Elementary
Mendocino	Mendocino Unified	Mendocino Junior-Senior High
Merced	Winton Elementary	Frank Sparks Elementary
Mono	Mammoth Unified	Mammoth High
Orange	Anaheim Union High	La Palma Junior High
	Brea-Olinda Unified	Brea Junior High
	Fountain Valley Elementary	Samuel Talbert Elementary
	Garden Grove Unified	Hilton D. Bell Junior High
	Tustin Unified	Columbus Tustin Intermediate
Placer	Placer Hills Elementary	Weimar Hills Junior High
Riverside	Alvord Unified	Wells Intermediate
Sacramento	Grant Joint Union High	Foothill Farms Junior High
San Bernardino	San Bernardino City Unified	Curtis Junior High
San Diego	San Diego City Unified	Montgomery Junior High
	Sweetwater Union High	Mar Vista Junior High
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	Aptos Junior High
		Portola Junior High
		Presidio Junior High
San Joaquin	Stockton City Unified	Marshall Junior High

APPENDIX D (Cont.)

County	District	School
San Mateo	Bayshore Elementary	Garnet Robertson Intermediate
	Brisbane Elementary	Natalie Lipman Intermediate
	Burlingame Elementary	Burlingame Intermediate
	San Mateo City Elementary	Bowditch Middle
Santa Barbara	Lompoc Unified	Vandenberg Junior High
Santa Clara	Alum Rock Union Elementary	Lee Mathson Middle
	Moreland Elementary	Samuel Curtis Rogers Intermediate
Santa Cruz	Pajaro Valley Unified	E. A. Hall Junior High
Solano	Fairfield-Suisun Unified	Grange Intermediate
Sutter	Live Oak Unified	Live Oak Elementary
Trinity	Hayfork Valley Union Elementary	Hayfork Valley Elementary
Tulare	Cutler-Orosi Unified	El Monte Elementary
	Dinuba Elementary	Washington Elementary
Ventura	Ventura Unified	Balboa Junior High
		Cabrillo Junior High
Yuba	Marysville Joint Unified	Anna L. McKenny Intermediate

APPENDIX E

Summary of Student Responses to Questions Pertaining to Opinions About Rights of Citizens

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Each Response Option
1. Do you feel that all groups should be allowed to hold public meetings as long as they are peaceful?	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure	80 07 12
2. Do you feel that it is right for the police to keep people in jail without telling them why?	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure	05 91 04
3. Do you feel that newspapers and magazines should be allowed to print things which you do not agree with?	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure	50 28 22
4. <u>To testify against yourself</u> means <u>to give evidence</u> that shows whether or not you are guilty of a criminal act. When people refuse to do this, do you feel they should be made to talk, under the threat of severe punishment?	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure	21 54 24
5. Do you feel that sometimes the police should be allowed to search a person or a home even though they do not have a search warrant?	a. Yes b. No c. Not sure	24 67 08

APPENDIX F

Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Social Participation
(Goal V of the Social Sciences Education Framework)

Appendix F-1: Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Social Participation at School

Appendix F-2: Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Leadership at School and in the Community

Appendix F-3: Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Social Participation in the Community

APPENDIX F-1

Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Social Participation at School

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
1. If there were a limited supply of game equipment for use on the playground during play/recess period, what WOULD you do?	a. Discuss the problem and develop a way in which everyone could share the equipment.	61
	b. Take what you could as fast as possible.	10
	c. Let everybody else take what they wanted even if it meant you wouldn't be able to use any equipment.	08
	d. Ask the teacher or a student to give out the equipment.	16
2. Suppose you and other students in your class are having a discussion to decide the choice of a topic for a group project. Which of the following actions WOULD you take?	a. Ask the teacher to decide which is the best topic.	07
	b. Let the other students in the class decide which is the best topic.	16
	c. Try to get the other students in the class to discuss each other's ideas and vote on the topics.	60
	d. Stick with your own choice for a topic, no matter what the other students in the class say.	13
3. If you and your class finished a messy art project, who WOULD take the first steps to clean up the mess?	a. The teacher	16
	b. You and the other students	76
	c. The custodian	05
4. If you and your class finished a messy art project, you WOULD help by cleaning up	a. only your individual work area.	14
	b. only the area used by your small group.	20
	c. any area of the classroom not cleaned up.	66
5. If your class were trying to settle a disagreement, which of the following actions WOULD you take?	a. I would try to keep quiet and not give my ideas.	10
	b. I would give my own ideas and listen to others.	86
	c. I would give my own ideas but not listen to others.	03

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
6. Suppose a group of kids that you are working with decides to do something. You feel it will be very unfair to one of the members of the group. WOULD you try to do something to get the kids in the group to do something else which is fair to everyone?	a. No, I wouldn't try to get the group to take some other action.	11
	b. I would say something, but I wouldn't expect the group to listen to me.	18
	c. Yes, I would try to get the group to take some other action.	67
7. If there were a limited amount of game equipment for use on the playground during play/recess period, what SHOULD you do?	a. Discuss the problem and develop a way in which everyone could share the equipment.	74
	b. Take what you could as fast as possible.	03
	c. Let everybody else take what they wanted even if it meant you wouldn't be able to use any equipment.	05
	d. Ask the teacher or a student to give out the equipment.	17
8. Suppose you and other students in your class are having a discussion to decide the choice of a topic for a group project. Which one of the following actions SHOULD you take?	a. Ask the teacher to decide which is the best topic.	07
	b. Let the other students in the class decide which is the best topic.	16
	c. Try to get the other students in the class to discuss each other's ideas and vote on the topics.	60
	d. Stick with your own choice for a topic, no matter what the other students in the class say.	13
9. If you and your class finished a messy art project, who SHOULD take the first steps to clean up the mess?	a. The teacher	06
	b. You and the other students	86
	c. The custodian	05
10. If you and your class finished a messy art project, you SHOULD help by cleaning up	a. only your individual work area.	14
	b. only the area used by your small group.	18
	c. any area of the classroom not cleaned up.	63

APPENDIX F-1 (Cont.)

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
11. Do you know what helps a group of people work well together? Look at the list below and circle the letters of all the things which help a group work well together.	a. Sharing ideas	77
	b. Listening to others	69
	c. Talking without listening	03
	d. Asking others for their ideas	62
	e. Speaking up when you don't agree with someone	54
	f. Arguing just because you don't like someone	03
	g. Asking others to explain when you don't understand	68
	h. Looking out the window instead of at the people in your group	02
	i. Doing your share of the work	70
	j. Helping the group know when the work is done	52
12. How often do you work with a small group of your classmates?	a. Often	22
	b. Sometimes	65
	c. Never	09
13. How often do you work with a large group of your classmates?	a. Often	19
	b. Sometimes	48
	c. Never	28
14. Should students take part in setting up and changing rules in the classroom?	a. Always	17
	b. Often	13
	c. Sometimes	48
	d. Rarely	08
	e. Never	13
15. If you feel a rule is unfair, which of the following actions do you feel you SHOULD take?	a. Ignore the rule.	06
	b. Follow the rule and say nothing about it.	21
	c. Follow the rule but try to change it.	69

APPENDIX F-1 (Cont.)

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
16. Do you like to help decide what you are going to study about in class?	a. Always	20
	b. Often	17
	c. Sometimes	41
	d. Rarely	11
	e. Never	09

APPENDIX F-2

Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Leadership at School and in the Community

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
1. When your class is working together to complete a project, the important people are the	a. leaders. b. followers. c. leaders and the followers.	25 06 63
2. Have you ever voted for student leaders for your school?	a. Yes b. No	76 21
3. If your class wanted to have student leaders, how do you think they should be chosen?	a. Chosen by the teacher b. Elected by the students c. Draw names	05 85 07
4. Would you be interested in being a leader in your class, at school, or in a group outside school?	a. Yes b. No	57 39
5. Have you ever been a leader in your class, at school, or in a group outside school?	a. Yes b. No	59 37
6. Have you ever voted for leaders of a group outside of school?	a. Yes b. No	52 43
7. Have you ever campaigned for someone you wanted to win an election?	a. Yes b. No	45 50

APPENDIX F-3

Summary of Student Responses to Items Pertaining to Social Participation in the Community

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
In the past you may have taken part in projects that help other people or make the world a better place. It might have been a school project, community project, club or group project in which you collected aluminum cans, bottles, or newspapers, or planted trees.		
1. How many times have you done something like this?	a. Never	13
	b. Once	18
	c. Twice	18
	d. Three times	13
	e. Four or more times	37
2. Do you feel that work on a project or projects such as these help other people or help to make the world a better place?	a. Yes	91
	b. No	07
3. Have you ever written a letter to your mayor, governor, congressman, or local newspaper?	a. Yes	21
	b. No	78
4. Have you read newspapers, magazines and books, or watched movies or T.V. to find out more about a problem?	a. Yes	82
	b. No	16
5. Have you talked to other students or adults about the problem and how they could help to solve a problem?	a. Yes	66
	b. No	32
6. Have you used posters, plays, or reports to publicize a problem and show possible ways of solving it?	a. Yes	34
	b. No	64

APPENDIX F-3 (Cont.)

Question	Response Option	Percent of Students Selecting Response Option
7. Which of the following things might help to make your community better? Circle as many as you feel could be helpful.	a. Planting trees	53
	b. Picking up litter	83
	c. Writing on the walls of a building	02
	d. Collecting cans, bottles, and newspapers for recycling	77
	e. Crossing the street when the light is red	06
	f. Getting a petition signed to change something	34
	g. Riding bicycles on the sidewalk	14
	h. Building a bicycle rack at school	45
8. Which of these things have you done?	a. Planting trees	28
	b. Picking up litter	68
	c. Writing on the walls of a building	11
	d. Collecting cans, bottles, and newspapers for recycling	66
	e. Crossing the street when the light is red	22
	f. Getting a petition signed to change something	12
	g. Riding bicycles on the sidewalk	45
	h. Building a bicycle rack at school	06

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